THE DARK AVENGER RETURNS!
THE Shadow STRIKES!™
SHADOW STRIKES
No.1
SEP '89
US $1.75
CAN $2.25
UK £1
DEATH'S HEAD
by Gerard Jones
& Eduardo Barreto

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Fans of the PUBLISHORIAL that usually runs in this space, please note: it will return next month, complete with its usual writer and usual topics, but with a new name. You see, Jenette's chosen to use the title President & Editor-In-Chief these days, and that means she has to come up with an appropriate name for her column. While she's doing that, since I got to add the title Publisher to my old one of Executive Vice President, I'm supposed to explain why there won't be PUBLISHORIALs any more.

Being Publisher can mean almost anything: in magazine or newspaper publishing, it usually means the person responsible for the business side of a publication; in the book world, often the person to whom both the business and editorial departments of an imprint report; and in comics, well, like everything else in comics, it's a little odd. Comics companies have had publishers whose responsibilities were primarily editorial (as Jenette's were thirteen years ago when she first became Publisher of DC) or business (as is the case of the Co-Publishers of Archie Comics, for example) or even being an honored founder, rather than an active participant in the company's publishing activities (this for probably the most famous Publisher in comics).

Being a traditional sort, in my case it means the traditional magazine role of a Publisher, handling the business from marketing to advertising and everything in between (which, coincidentally, is exactly what I was doing as DC's Exec VP). And that also explains why there won't be PUBLISHORIALs any more. If you're like most comics fans, you're here for the entertainment value of comics, and would rather not be interrupted by reminders that it's published in the hope of earning someone a modest profit. So I promise to make this the first *and* last Note From The Publisher for a while.

I feel duty-bound, however, to use this one opportunity to give at least a crash-course in the hidden departments of DC Comics—all the people who help keep the comics successful, and often help the creative side of the company find ways to make things better for you. Taking it in the order of our hallways, here's the tour:

Business Affairs and International Rights: These two departments are both the province of VP Chantal d'Aulnis, who won her job some years ago by swearing she wouldn't think of selling the right to publish DC stories to foreign publishers unless she'd read them—all of them. Business Affairs is responsible for our contracts—the deals we make with writers and artists, as well as with other publishers; and International Rights makes sure that our best comics are re-published in languages from Arabic to Turkish (they're still trying to get a Zulu deal, just to make that line read better).

Licensing: Director Cheryl Rubin and her team are responsible for making sure the seeming four million authorized Bat-things all are of good quality, and carry the right DC images. With the number of toys on their shelves, they qualify as having the offices at DC that are the most fun to visit.

Marketing: Probably the most important DC business department to our readers, since they're responsible for getting comics into the comics shops. VP Bruce Bristow and company keep retailers informed of what's coming, and produce posters and other promotional items to build excitement.

Circulation: If you're not a comics shop shopper, but go to newsstands or WaldenBooks or B. Dalton's, it's this department that gets your comics there. Director Matt Ragone doesn't personally straighten out their racks, but that's about all Circulation can't do to help the process along.

Advertising: That's the sale of ad space in our comics, not taking out ads to tell you about our comics (that's Marketing's job). Director Tom Ballou joined us late last year to launch the ad unit in DC's new format and deluxe titles, and honorary DC-er Bernie Slotnick's been handling the letterpress line for over a decade from his offices on Lexington Avenue.

Accounting: Our favorite department. Without VP/Controller Pat Caldon and his crew, no one around here gets paid . . . and much as we know writers, artists, and editors produce the comics for love, someone has to pay for the paper we print on.

That's the business side of DC, and at least a brief explanation of some of the names and titles you see on our masthead every month, or mentioned in passing in lettercolumns or the like. As for my new title, let me close with one comment on why it has meaning to me, and with one coincidence.

For all the confused usage of Publisher I talked about at the beginning of this column, the word still has a clear implication to the world at large: the person with the title has some responsibility for a publishing company. And despite the many other exciting areas that DC is involved in—from cartoons to the current BATMAN extravaganza—at heart, we're a publishing company. Making magic by printing ink on paper, and in the process somehow capturing the reader's imagination. That's an ancient and honorable responsibility, and I'm proud to help make it happen, behind the scenes or otherwise.

And finally, the coincidence. The last time I had the title Publisher beside my name was when I was doing fanzines in my teen years. And the very last time, if memory serves, was on a fanzine named ETCETERA. Now one of my first credits as Publisher of DC will crop up on Piranha Press's new title, ETC. As I said, everything in comics is a little odd.

—Paul Levitz

P.S. Next month, the return of the NOT-THE-PUBLISHORIAL . . . ?

DC LIST

THIS WEEK

THE PHANTOM 7
Diana accompanies The Phantom to the site of a new gold rush, where greed and murder rule. ■▶

SPECTRE 29
The final chapter of "Ghosts in the Machine" brings the world to the brink of electronic disaster with only the Spectre coming to the rescue. ■▶

GREEN ARROW 24
Blood of the Dragon, Part 4: The Deadly Showdown in Japan . ■▶▲

THE SHADOW STRIKES! 1
All-new monthly adventures set back in the 1930s as Gerard Jones and Eduardo Barreto investigate a murder at the Cobalt Club. ■▶

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS 10
After being blasted by Ilserv the Mind Flayer, Onyx and Tertius have to pull themselves together and find help. ■▶

DR. FATE 10
What is the mysterious illness that afflicts Eric . . . and what does it mean to Dr. Fate? ■▶

FORGOTTEN REALMS 1
TSR's latest smash hit comes to comics and the first four parts come at you bi-weekly as we meet brand-new world. ■▶

NEW GODS 8
Searching for his birthright, Orion makes an incognito pilgrimage into the depths of Armagetto . ■▶

CAPTAIN ATOM 33
Captain Atom has lost his powers! Can he regain them before he's destroyed. ●

DETECTIVE COMICS 605
The Mudpack, Part 2 has Batman trapped by the Clayfaces, only to be rescued by—Looker? ●

SUICIDE SQUAD 33
Duchess hand-picks a team for a perilous mission of revenge on Apokolips against the Female Furies. ●

ACTION COMICS 645
There's a new woman in the Man of Steel's life—he just doesn't know it yet. Introducing Maxima . . . and she wants Superman. ●

HELLBLAZER ANNUAL 1
An examination of Constantine's confusion while committed in Ravenscar, and a look at his distant relative from the Dark Ages. ■▶▲

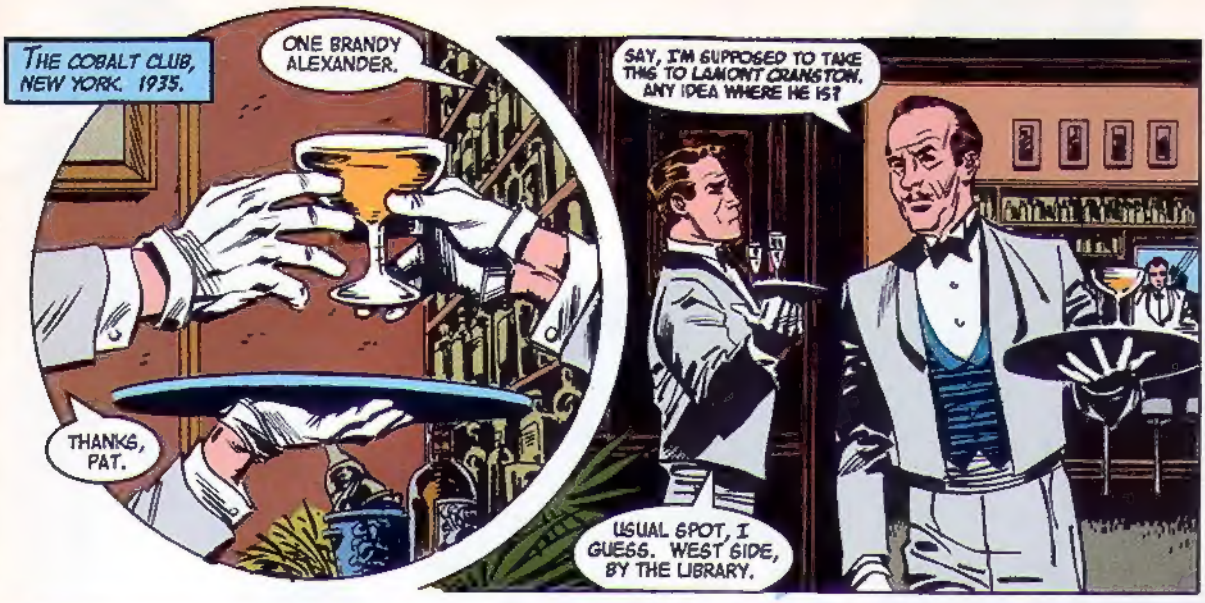
SGT. ROCK SPECIAL 5
Our first all-Rock issue boasts three titanic tales with art by Ross Andru, Joe Kubert, and Russ Heath! ●

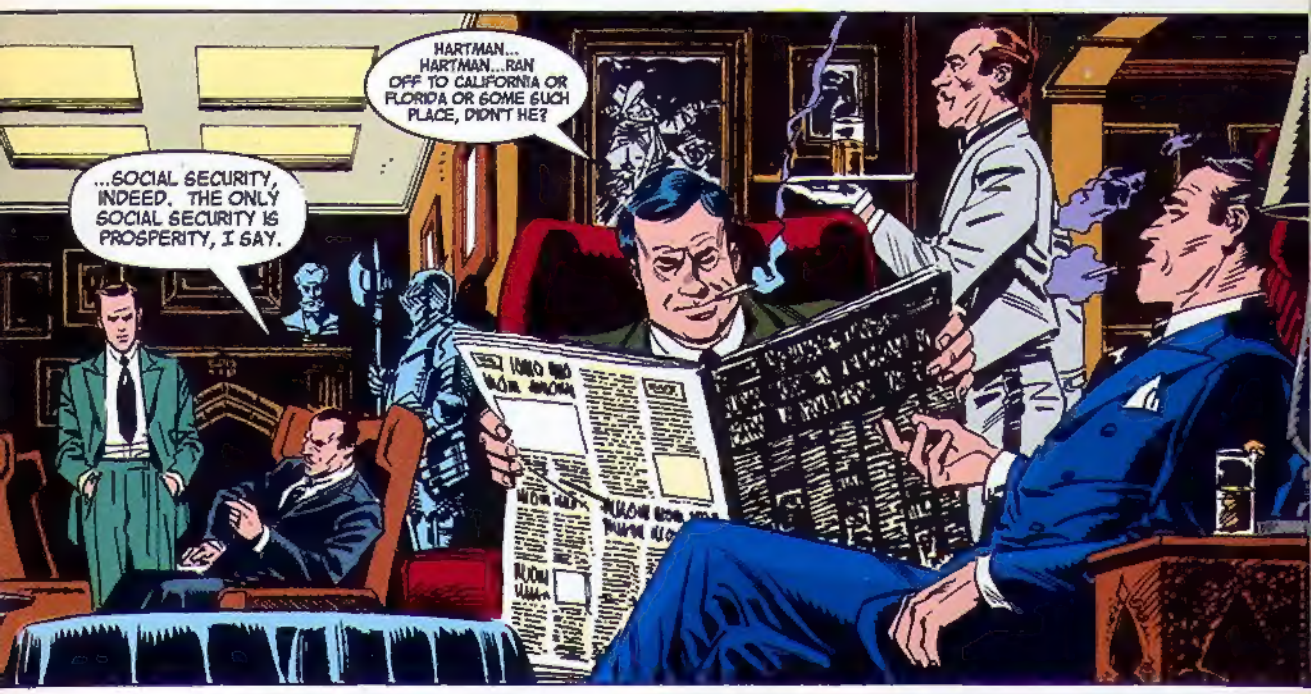
SKREEMER 5
The Finnegans keep waking, the gangs keep waiting, and Veto Skreemer goes to confession as the deadly air balloons float over America. ◆▶▲

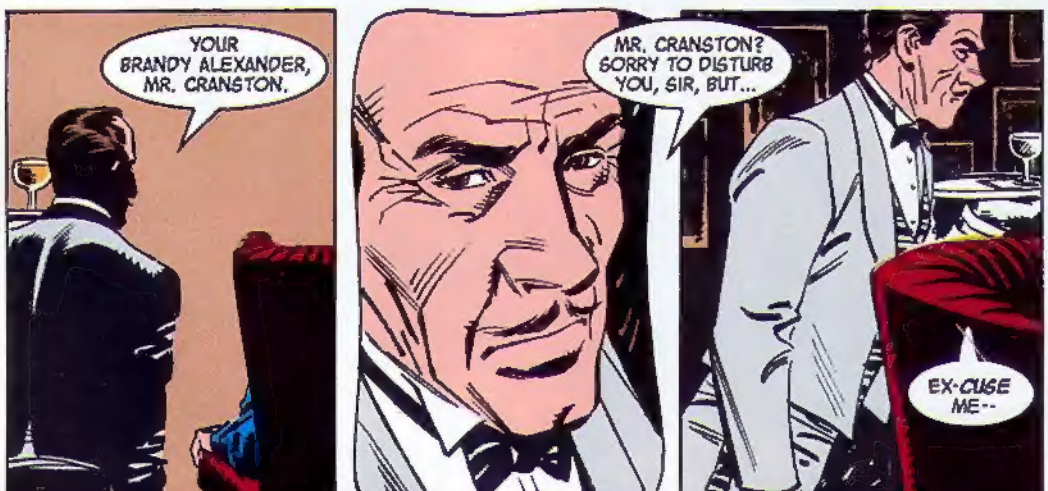
THE QUESTION 30
The Question and Lady Shiva stand between opposing forces in the battle for Hub City's soul. ◆▶▲

LEGEND

● Standard Format	★ Prestige Format
■ New Format	□ Graphic Novel
◆ Deluxe Format	◫ Collected Edition
▶ Available at Select Outlets	▲ Suggested for Mature Readers


THE COBALT CLUB, NEW YORK. 1935.
ONE BRANDY ALEXANDER.
THANKS, PAT.
SAY, I'M SUPPOSED TO TAKE THIS TO LAMONT CRANSTON. ANY IDEA WHERE HE IS?
USUAL SPOT, I GUESS. WEST SIDE, BY THE LIBRARY.


HARTMAN... HARTMAN...RAN OFF TO CALIFORNIA OR FLORIDA OR SOME SUCH PLACE, DIDN'T HE?
...SOCIAL SECURITY, INDEED. THE ONLY SOCIAL SECURITY IS PROSPERITY, I SAY.

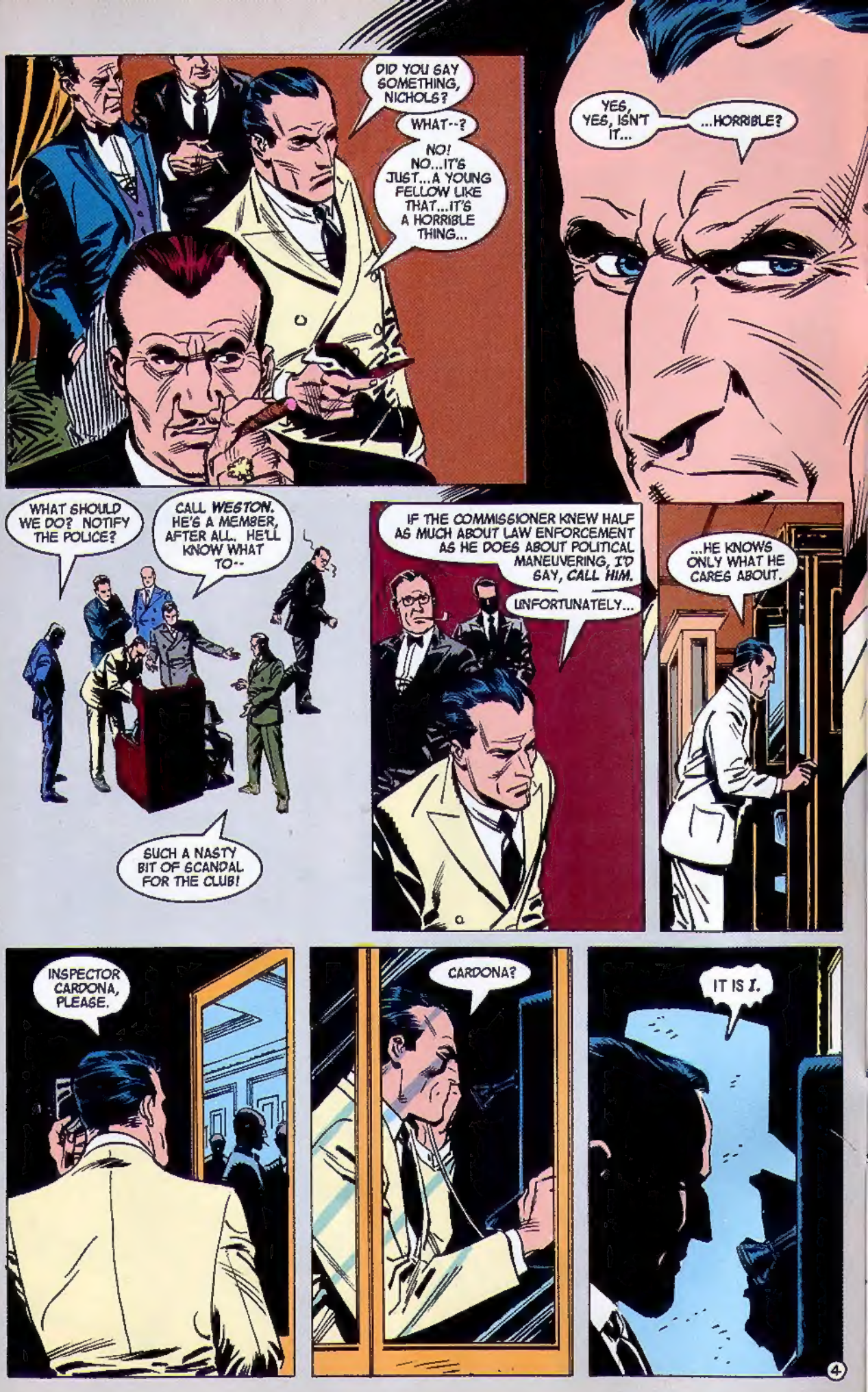


THE SHADOW STRIKES 1 Published monthly by DC Comics Inc., 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y 10103. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE SHADOW STRIKES, DC Comics Subscriptions, P.O. Box 0528, Baldwin, NY 11510. Annual subscription rate $21.00, Canada $23.00, all other foreign $31.00 U.S. funds only. For mature readers of 19 years of age or older. Signature required. Written parental approval required if under age 19. Copyright © 1989 The Conde Nast Publications, Inc. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of The Conde Nast Publications, Inc. For advertising space contact: Tom Ballou, (212) 484-2870. Printed in Canada.
DC Comics Inc. A Warner Communications Company

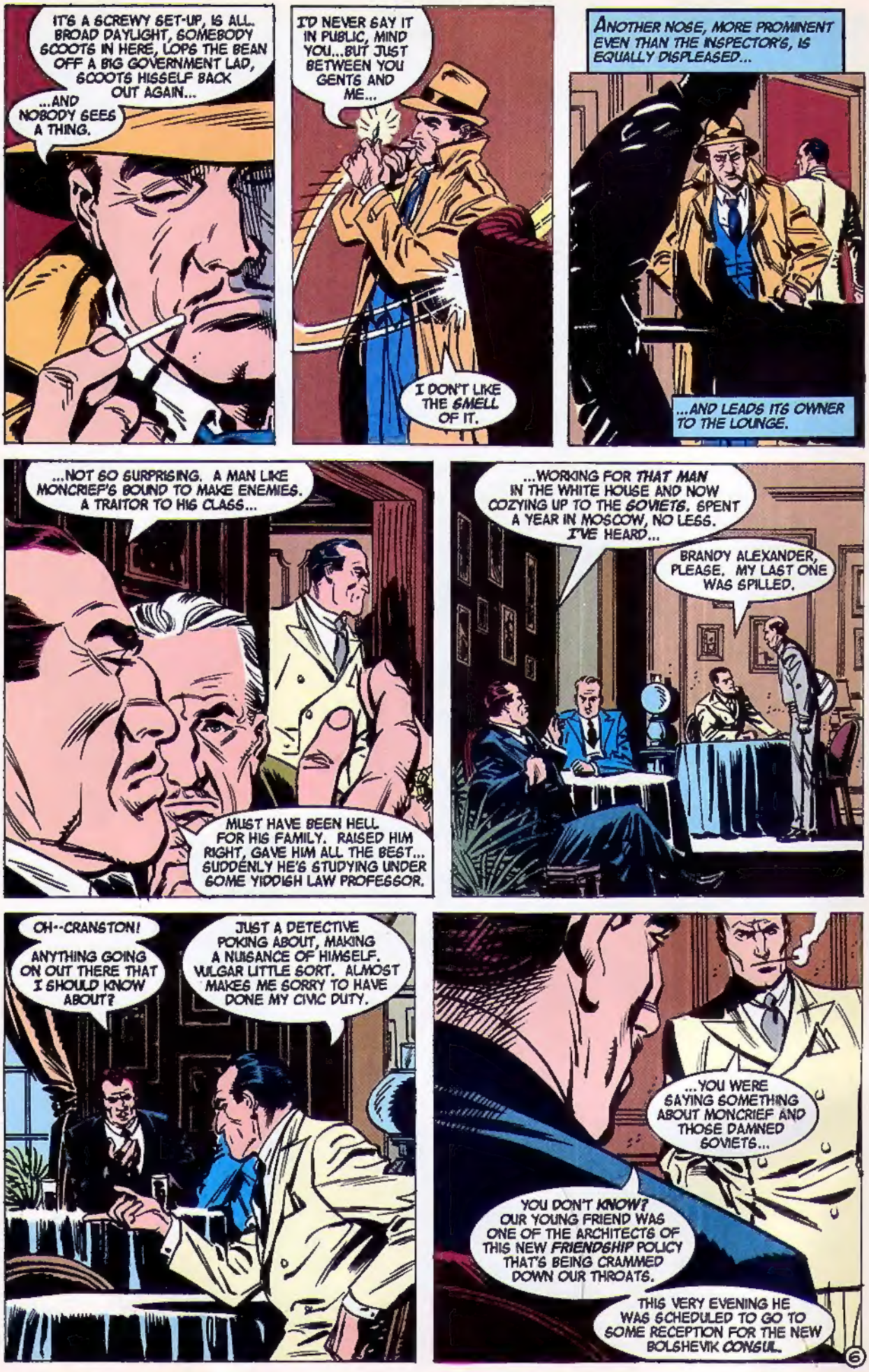
DEATH'S HEAD

FROM THE SHADOW'S PRIVATE ANNALS,
AS TOLD TO:
GERARD JONES, WRITER
EDUARDO BARRETO, ARTIST
DAVID CODY WEISS, LETTERER
ANTHONY TOLLIN, COLORIST
BRIAN AUGUSTYN EDITOR

DID SOMEONE CALL?
GOOD GOD!
LAMONT!
YOU'RE ALIVE!
AS MUCH AS I EVER AM. WHY--
OH.
HE'S DEAD, MR. CRANSTON! HE'S DEAD!
I'LL WAGER HE IS.
DO WE KNOW WHO HE IS?
WE THOUGHT HE WAS YOU, CRANSTON.
DEATH WOULD NEVER BE THAT DECENT, NICHOLS.
DEPARTMENT OF STATE LIAISON
ALGIS MONCRIEF
IT'S POOR YOUNG MONCRIEF.
DEAR LORD!
MONCRIEF!
WHO WOULD DO SUCH A THING?
SO SOON...


DID YOU SAY SOMETHING, NICHOLS?
WHAT--?
NO! NO...IT'S JUST...A YOUNG FELLOW LIKE THAT...IT'S A HORRIBLE THING...
YES, YES, ISN'T IT...
...HORRIBLE?
WHAT SHOULD WE DO? NOTIFY THE POLICE?
CALL *WESTON*. HE'S A MEMBER, AFTER ALL. HE'LL KNOW WHAT TO--
SUCH A NASTY BIT OF SCANDAL FOR THE CLUB!
IF THE COMMISSIONER KNEW HALF AS MUCH ABOUT LAW ENFORCEMENT AS HE DOES ABOUT POLITICAL MANEUVERING, *I'D* SAY, *CALL HIM.*
UNFORTUNATELY...
...HE KNOWS ONLY WHAT HE CARES ABOUT.
INSPECTOR CARDONA, PLEASE.
CARDONA?
IT IS *I*.
4

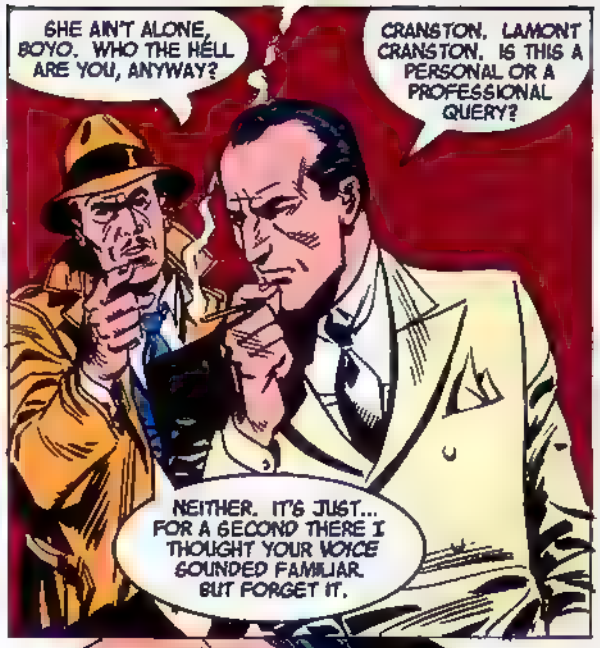
IN MINUTES, EMERGENCY VEHICLES SCREAM TOWARD THE SOMBER BROWNSTONE IN THE EAST 30'S...
COBALT CLUB
...THEN CIRCLE THE BLOCK TO THE SERVICE ALLEY.
GOOD OF YOU NOT TO CAUSE A SCENE AT THE FRONT, INSPECTOR. I'LL SEE THAT YOU'RE--
I KNOW MY ORDERS. NO EMBARRASSING THE COBALT CLUB.
NOT IN PUBLIC, ANYHOW.
HERE IS...MR. MONCRIEF. YOU CAN SEE...
HO-LEE GEEZ!
THAT'S A HELL OF A CLEAN SLICE, ALL RIGHT!
I HOPE WE NAB THIS MANIAC BY NOVEMBER.
I COULD USE A JOE WITH HIS TALENTS FOR THANKSGIVING.
TELL ME, BUDDY. YOU BEEN TOO BUSY TWISTING YOUR KNUCKLES OVER HOW THIS'LL LOOK TO DO ANY THINKING ABOUT YOUR NOGGINLESS PAL HERE?
SUCH AS--ANYBODY EVEN BOTHER TO SCOUT AROUND FOR THE POOR GUY'S HEAD YET?
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? THAT WE SHOULD BE DIGGING ABOUT FOR...THAT WE HAVEN'T BEEN...
OKAY, OKAY, SHUT OFF THE VALVE, CAP'N.

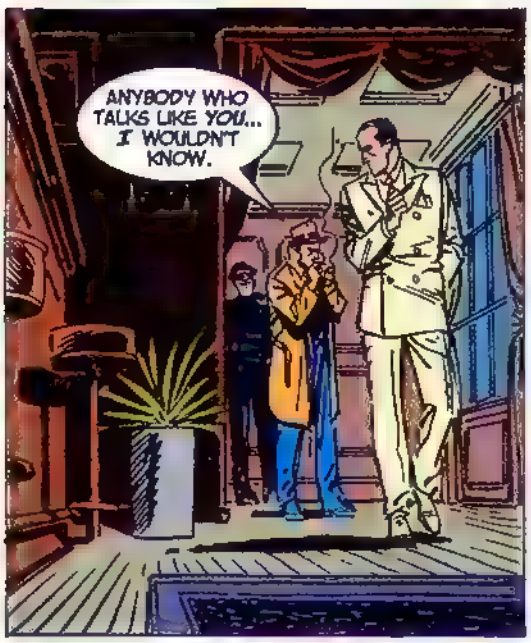

IT'S A SCREWY SET-UP, IS ALL. BROAD DAYLIGHT, SOMEBODY SCOOTS IN HERE, LOPS THE BEAN OFF A BIG GOVERNMENT LAD, SCOOTS HISSELF BACK OUT AGAIN...
...AND NOBODY SEES A THING.
I'D NEVER SAY IT IN PUBLIC, MIND YOU...BUT JUST BETWEEN YOU GENTS AND ME...
I DON'T LIKE THE SMELL OF IT.
ANOTHER NOSE, MORE PROMINENT EVEN THAN THE INSPECTOR'S, IS EQUALLY DISPLEASED...
...AND LEADS ITS OWNER TO THE LOUNGE.
...NOT SO SURPRISING. A MAN LIKE MONCRIEF'S BOUND TO MAKE ENEMIES. A TRAITOR TO HIS CLASS...
MUST HAVE BEEN HELL FOR HIS FAMILY. RAISED HIM RIGHT, GAVE HIM ALL THE BEST... SUDDENLY HE'S STUDYING UNDER SOME YIDDISH LAW PROFESSOR.
...WORKING FOR THAT MAN IN THE WHITE HOUSE AND NOW COZYING UP TO THE SOVIETS. SPENT A YEAR IN MOSCOW, NO LESS. I'VE HEARD...
BRANDY ALEXANDER, PLEASE. MY LAST ONE WAS SPILLED.
OH--CRANSTON!
ANYTHING GOING ON OUT THERE THAT I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?
JUST A DETECTIVE POKING ABOUT, MAKING A NUISANCE OF HIMSELF. VULGAR LITTLE SORT. ALMOST MAKES ME SORRY TO HAVE DONE MY CIVIC DUTY.
...YOU WERE SAYING SOMETHING ABOUT MONCRIEF AND THOSE DAMNED SOVIETS...
YOU DON'T KNOW? OUR YOUNG FRIEND WAS ONE OF THE ARCHITECTS OF THIS NEW FRIENDSHIP POLICY THAT'S BEING CRAMMED DOWN OUR THROATS.
THIS VERY EVENING HE WAS SCHEDULED TO GO TO SOME RECEPTION FOR THE NEW BOLSHEVIK CONSUL.
6

WELL! IT SOUNDS AS THOUGH YOU'VE BEEN PAYING ATTENTION--EVEN IF THE REST OF US HAVEN'T.
DAMN STRAIGHT, CRANSTON! DAMN STRAIGHT I HAVE!
HELL, IF ONE OF OUR *OWN* IS CONSPIRING TO AID THOSE WHO'D DESTROY EVERYTHING WE HOLD DEAR... WHAT ELSE CAN A MAN DO?
IN FACT, I'VE LEARNED SOMETHING ABOUT MONCRIEF'S DEALINGS IN MOSCOW.
THERE'S A VICE-CONSUL, *VASILEVICH*. HE MET WITH--
AAAAAAA
AAAAAAAALGIS!
BUT MADAME-- MADAME--LADIES AREN'T *ALLOWED* IN THE--
OH, MY POOR ALGIS! *NO*, IT CAN'T BE! I HAVE TO *SEE* HIM!
ALGIS! MY BEAUTIFUL *ALGIS!* WHY *HIM?* WHY *HIM?* WHAT WERE HIS *SINS?*
WAIT, MISS-- PLEASE--
HOLD ON, HONEY--CALM DOWN--
I HAVE TO *SEE* HIM! WHO *ARE* YOU? I DON'T KNOW YOU!
I'M A *COP*. I'M INVESTIGATING YOUR HUSBAND'S--
HE WASN'T MY HUSBAND...NOT YET...
NEVER! HE WILL *NEVER* BE! WE WERE TO BE MARRIED NEXT MONTH...HE'D WANTED IT EARLIER, BUT I COULDN'T... THE STARS WERE WRONG, THE *COSMOS* MISALIGNED, IT...IT...

OH, ALGIS! I MUST SEE HIM!
YOU DON'T WANT TO SEE HIM, HONEY-- LISTEN TO ME-- YOU DON'T--
YOU SEE, IT'S HIS HEAD, MISS. IT'S...
HIS... HEAD...?
NO! NOT THAT!
HE WOULDN'T DO THAT--NO REASON TO--
MADAME ZARA! SHE'LL KNOW!
HIS HEAD! I MUST HAVE HIS HEAD! GIVE ME HIS HEAD!
LADY, I DON'T HAVE IT! WHAT THE HELL--
LET HER BE, INSPECTOR.
I'M...I'M SORRY. I'M NOT THINKING...
PERHAPS I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN. PERHAPS I SIMPLY... FAILED TO READ THE SIGNS. THAT IS WHY I AM BUT THE SERVANT. AND HE IS THE MASTER.
"HE?" WHO ARE YOU--
I'M SORRY...I SHOULDN'T HAVE COME...NOT LIKE THIS.
IF YOU WISH TO QUESTION ME LATER... MY NAME IS LUCILLE CHEVIOT. WHILE IN TOWN I STAY AT THE ASTOR WITH MY AUNT, ELEANOR CHEVIOT.

NOW...YOU MUST EXCUSE ME.
HEY--
I SUGGEST PERMITTING THE LADY TO LEAVE, INSPECTOR. I'M SURE THIS IS A DIFFICULT TIME FOR HER.


SHE AIN'T ALONE, BOYO. WHO THE HELL ARE YOU, ANYWAY?
CRANSTON, LAMONT CRANSTON. IS THIS A PERSONAL OR A PROFESSIONAL QUERY?
NEITHER. IT'S JUST... FOR A SECOND THERE I THOUGHT YOUR VOICE SOUNDED FAMILIAR. BUT FORGET IT.


ANYBODY WHO TALKS LIKE YOU... I WOULDN'T KNOW.

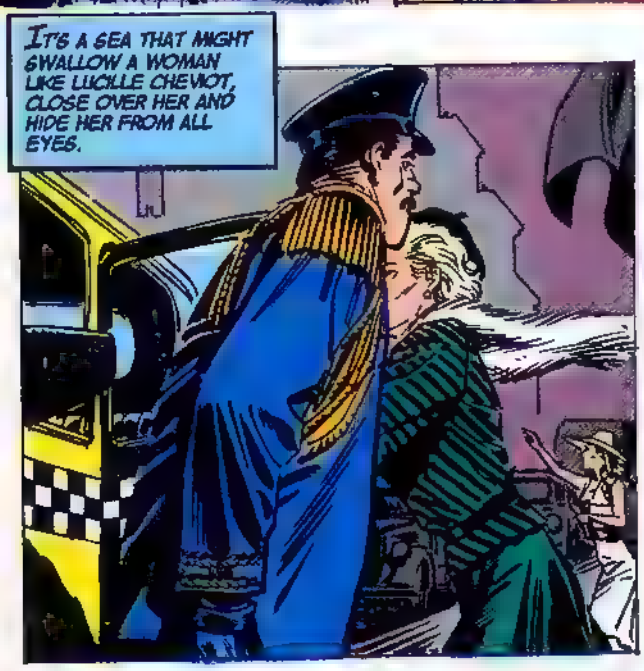
NICHOLS?

NICHOLS...

AN APARTMENT ON PARK AVENUE.
♪ SOMETIMES I WONDER WHY I SPEND... THE LONELY NIGHTS... ♪
RRING RRING
HI'LO?
OH. YOU. YES, YES, OF COURSE I'M FREE... THAT'S THE ARRANGEMENT, ISN'T--?
WAIT. LET ME GET A PENCIL. YOU'LL HAVE TO HANG ON A SEC, I'M DOING MY NAILS.
YES, I CAN WRITE. IT'S MY TOENAILS I'M DOING.
I MAY NOT BE A COLLEGE GIRL, BUT STILL, I DON'T WRITE WITH MY FEET.
ALL RIGHT. I'M READY.
LUCILLE CHEVIOT... ASTOR...MADAME ZARA... THAT'S Z-A-R-A? FINE. "HE IS THE TEACHER." OOH, THAT'S A SPOOKY ONE...
STARS...COSMOS MISALIGNED...THIS SOUNDS LIKE A GRAND OLD TIME, DOESN'T IT?
HELLO, I'D LIKE YOU TO TRANSMIT A MESSAGE TO MR. CARLISLE, PLEASE. TELL HIM THAT MISS MARGO LANE WILL BE UNABLE TO MAKE OUR ENGAGEMENT THIS EVENING.
NO, HE WON'T BE ABLE TO REACH ME. JUST TELL HIM THAT SOMETHING'S COME UP...BEYOND MY CONTROL.
YES. I KNOW WHAT TO DO. YES. YES.
TELL THE CHIEF TO EXPECT MY CALL.
10

THE HOTEL METROLITE.
HARRY, SWEETIE... DO YOU REALLY THINK THERE'S SUCH A PERSON LIKE THIS SHADOW GUY?
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS, CUTES. THE REAL WORLD DOESN'T HAVE ROOM FOR PEOPLE LIKE THAT.
WELL, IT SAYS RIGHT HERE IN THE EVENING CLASSIC...
SAY, HAVEN'T I TOLD YOU NOT TO READ THAT TABLOID GARBAGE? IT'LL RUIN YOUR DELICATE SENSIBILITIES.
MURDER TRAIL ENDS IN SILENT DEATH!
BUT HARRY! IT SAYS RIGHT HERE THAT RIGHT DURING THAT SAME STICK-UP WHICH YOU SAVED MY LIFE IN, THE SHADOW WAS REALLY--
SO THAT'S IT. YOU'RE SAYING THAT I DIDN'T REALLY SAVE YOUR LIFE AT ALL, THAT I JUST--
OH, NO, HARRY! THAT'S NOT IT! PLEASE!
OH, HARRY, HONEY, THAT WAS SO BRAVE, WHAT YOU DID FOR ME! I'LL BE JUST SO GRATEFUL TO YOU FOREVER AND EVER AND EVER!
THE NEXT EIGHT HOURS WILL BE MORE THAN ENOUGH, CUTIE.
DAMN.
RING RING
THEY'LL CALL BACK, SWEETUMS. JUST IGNORE IT.
I CAN'T.
VINCENT.
YES, I UNDERSTAND. JOHN NICHOLS.
IS THIS URGENT? BECAUSE IT'S DINNER-TIME, AND I WAS JUST WHIPPING UP A LITTLE DISH...
RIGHT. TELL THE BOSS I'M ON IT.
AND WHAT THE HELL, ANYWAY. SOME DISHES ARE BETTER IF YOU LET THEM STEW FOR A WHILE.

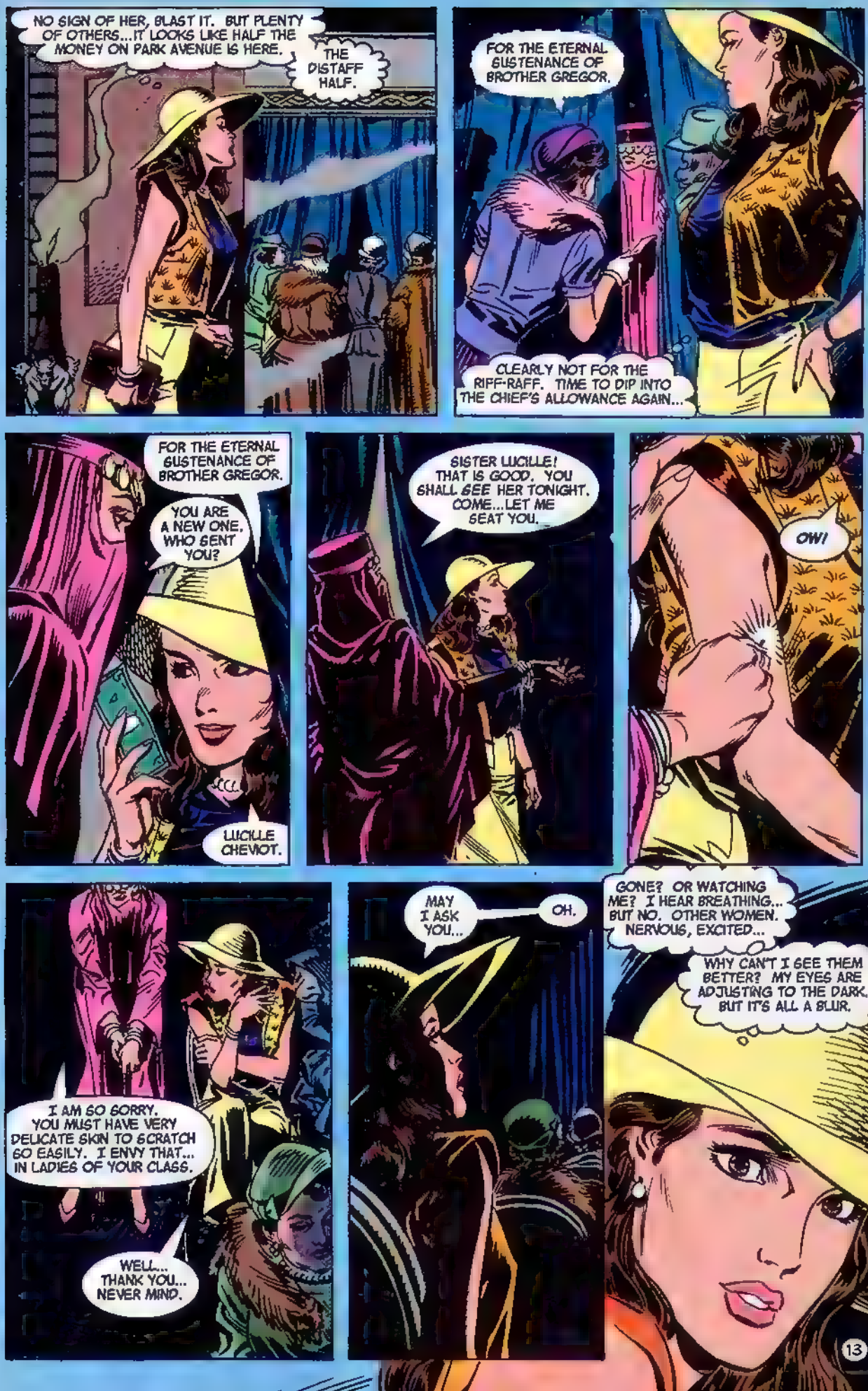
TIMES SQUARE HEATS UP AS THE SUN GOES DOWN. THE OUTFLOW OF DAYWORKERS RUNS SWEATY AND TIRED INTO THE FIRST PERFUMED WAVE OF THEATERGOERS.
THE SEA OF HUMANITY IS NEVER DEEPER, NEVER WILDER.
BECOME A MILLIONAIRE BY AGE 30!
TRY OUR NEW IMPROVED SELF-HELP PLAN FOR INSTANT SUCCESS
Van Cleef & Arpels
Omega Oil

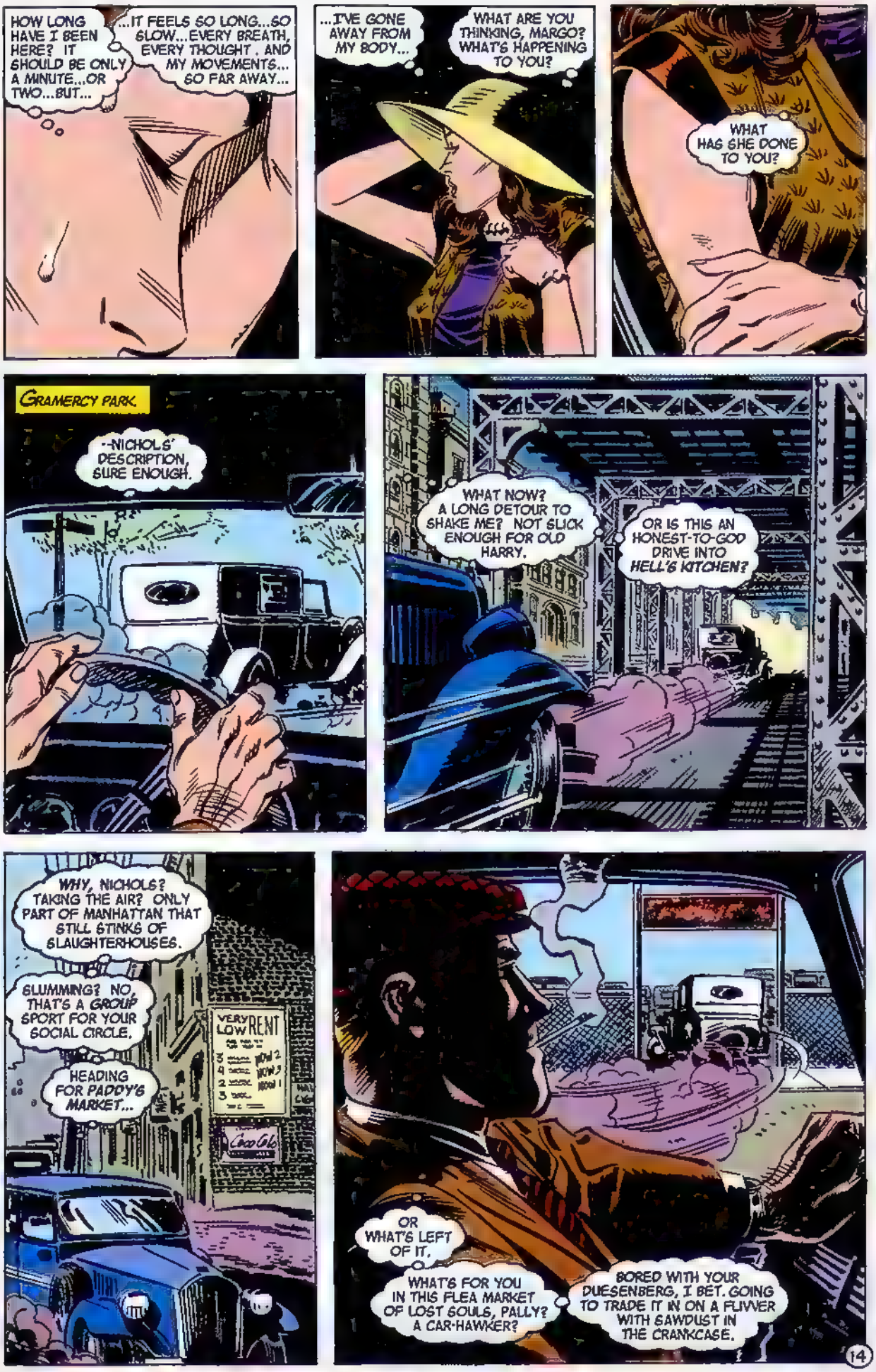

IT'S A SEA THAT MIGHT SWALLOW A WOMAN LIKE LUCILLE CHEVIOT, CLOSE OVER HER AND HIDE HER FROM ALL EYES.

FOLLOW THAT CAB, PLEASE.
DOWN BROADWAY THEY PICK THEIR WAY, PAST THEATERS, DEPARTMENT STORES, AROUND THE EDGE OF WASHINGTON SQUARE...

...TO END IN THE COFFEE-SCENTED CARNIVAL OF GREENWICH VILLAGE.
KENT

METAPHYSICAL CHURCH OF THE ARBOR LUNA
REFERRALS PREFERRED
DONATIONS REQUIRED
WELL, THAT'S CERTAINLY A DELICATE WAY OF SAYING, "GET LOST." A LITTLE TOO DELICATE TO WORK ON ME...


NO SIGN OF HER, BLAST IT. BUT PLENTY OF OTHERS...IT LOOKS LIKE HALF THE MONEY ON PARK AVENUE IS HERE.
THE DISTAFF HALF.
FOR THE ETERNAL SUSTENANCE OF BROTHER GREGOR.
CLEARLY NOT FOR THE RIFF-RAFF. TIME TO DIP INTO THE CHIEF'S ALLOWANCE AGAIN...
FOR THE ETERNAL SUSTENANCE OF BROTHER GREGOR.
YOU ARE A NEW ONE. WHO SENT YOU?
LUCILLE CHEVIOT.
SISTER LUCILLE! THAT IS GOOD. YOU SHALL SEE HER TONIGHT. COME...LET ME SEAT YOU.
OW!
I AM SO SORRY. YOU MUST HAVE VERY DELICATE SKIN TO SCRATCH SO EASILY. I ENVY THAT... IN LADIES OF YOUR CLASS.
WELL... THANK YOU... NEVER MIND.
MAY I ASK YOU...
OH.
GONE? OR WATCHING ME? I HEAR BREATHING... BUT NO. OTHER WOMEN. NERVOUS, EXCITED...
WHY CAN'T I SEE THEM BETTER? MY EYES ARE ADJUSTING TO THE DARK... BUT IT'S ALL A BLUR.


HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN HERE? IT SHOULD BE ONLY A MINUTE...OR TWO...BUT...
...IT FEELS SO LONG...SO SLOW...EVERY BREATH, EVERY THOUGHT. AND MY MOVEMENTS... SO FAR AWAY...
...I'VE GONE AWAY FROM MY BODY...
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING, MARGO? WHAT'S HAPPENING TO YOU?
WHAT HAS SHE DONE TO YOU?
GRAMERCY PARK.
--NICHOLS' DESCRIPTION, SURE ENOUGH.
WHAT NOW? A LONG DETOUR TO SHAKE ME? NOT SLICK ENOUGH FOR OLD HARRY.
OR IS THIS AN HONEST-TO-GOD DRIVE INTO HELL'S KITCHEN?
WHY, NICHOLS? TAKING THE AIR? ONLY PART OF MANHATTAN THAT STILL STINKS OF SLAUGHTERHOUSES.
SLUMMING? NO, THAT'S A GROUP SPORT FOR YOUR SOCIAL CIRCLE.
HEADING FOR PADDY'S MARKET...
VERY LOW RENT
OR WHAT'S LEFT OF IT.
WHAT'S FOR YOU IN THIS FLEA MARKET OF LOST SOULS, PALLY? A CAR-HAWKER?
BORED WITH YOUR DUESENBERG, I BET. GOING TO TRADE IT IN ON A FLIVVER WITH SAWDUST IN THE CRANKCASE.

JUST A LITTLE CLOSER AND--
WHAT?
I'VE HEARD THAT LANGUAGE BEFORE... HEARD THE BOSS USE IT...

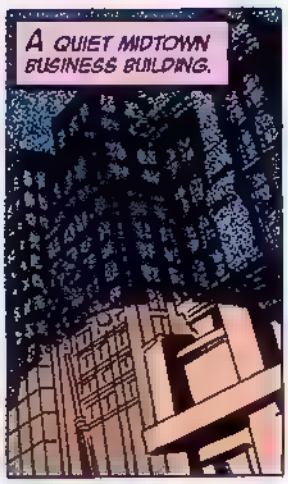
IT'S RUSSIAN!

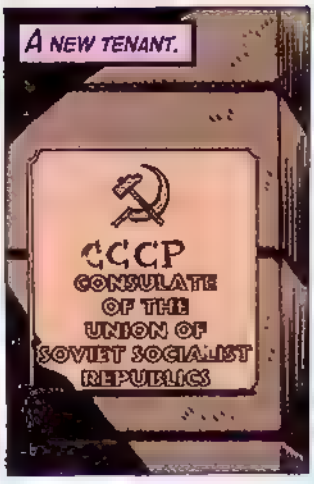
BOSS' ORDERS: DON'T LET THEM SEE ME. BUT THE FIRST THING HE ASKS IS GOING TO BE, "WHAT TRANSPIRED IN THAT TRAILER?"
AND I'D BETTER BE ABLE TO TELL HIM...

...THAT NICHOLS IS MEETING WITH...GYPSIES?

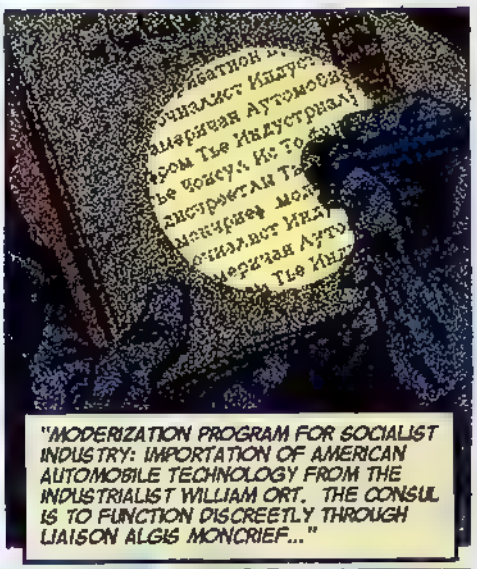
DON'T UNDERSTAND A WORD, DAMN IT... BUT THOSE GESTURES SPEAK LOUDER THAN--

OH.


A QUIET MIDTOWN BUSINESS BUILDING.


A NEW TENANT.
СССР
CONSULATE OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

AND A VISITOR.


"MODERIZATION PROGRAM FOR SOCIALIST INDUSTRY: IMPORTATION OF AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE TECHNOLOGY FROM THE INDUSTRIALIST WILLIAM ORT. THE CONSUL IS TO FUNCTION DISCREETLY THROUGH LIAISON ALGIS MONCRIEF..."

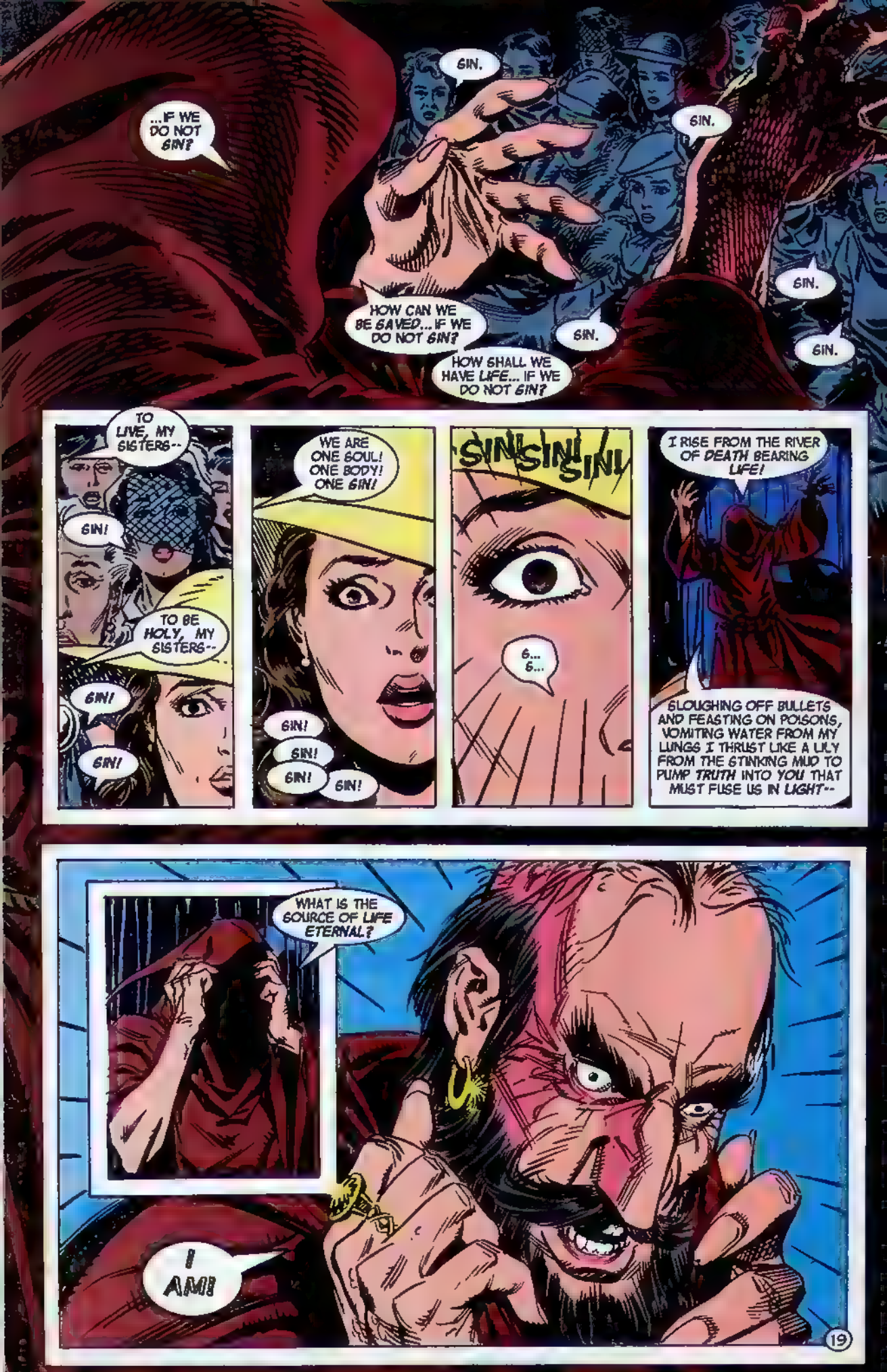
NO ONE ELSE WOULD HEAR THE VOICES.
THEY ARE MANY DOORS AWAY AND MUFFLED.

BUT THIS ONE HEARS THEM, TRACES THEM, SILENTLY APPROACHES THEM...

AND UNDERSTANDS THE LANGUAGE IN WHICH THEY ARE SPEAKING.
I WORRY ABOUT YOU, MY OLD FRIEND. I DO.

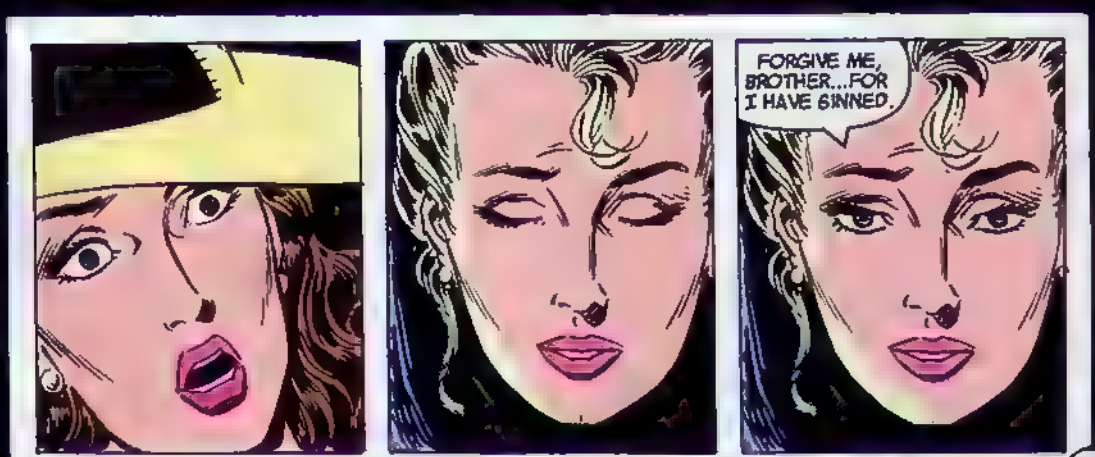
THE MOOD IS TENSE IN MOSCOW. THEY SAY ZINOVIEV IS NOT LONG FOR HIS POSITION... PERHAPS NOT LONG FOR THIS WORLD. WHICH, OF COURSE, IS THE ONLY WORLD, I HASTEN TO ADD.
STALIN WILL BE CONSOLIDATING HIS POSITION AS THE GERMANS BECOME MORE RESTIVE.
IT WILL BE A PERFECT TIME TO RISE WITHIN THE PARTY...BUT LOYALTY WILL BE ESSENTIAL.
I THOUGHT MY LOYALTY WAS GUARANTEED, ZHERKOV. YOU'VE HARDLY LEFT ME ANY CHOICE, HAVE YOU?
YOU'RE A CONFOUNDING MAN, ALEXANDER VASILEVICH. FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS I HAVE PROTECTED YOU FROM YOUR OWN PAST...AND ASKED SO LITTLE IN RETURN.
ONLY COMPLETE OBEDIENCE. WHICH I'VE GIVEN YOU. OUTWARDLY.
WHAT IS IN MY HEART IS MINE ALONE. DON'T TRY TO TAMPER WITH IT--YOUR OWN POSITION MAY NOT BE AS INVULNERABLE AS YOU THINK.
SOMEDAY, VASILEVICH, YOUR SANCTIMONIOUSNESS WILL OVERRULE YOUR PRUDENCE. THEN I WILL BE FORCED TO MAKE THAT REPORT TO THE PARTY WHICH I HAVE THREATENED FOR SO LONG.
BUT FOR NOW... PUT ON YOUR HEARTIEST SLAVIC MANNER. OUR AMERICAN HOSTS WILL BE EXPECTING IT.
WE MUST SHOW ALGIS MONCRIEF AND HIS CAPITALIST FRIENDS THAT WE ARE WORTHY OF THEIR MORAL--AND FINANCIAL--SUPPORT.
SILENTLY, HE FOLLOWS...
...AND FINDS HE IS NOT THE ONLY FOLLOWER.
NO.
NO.

IT CANNOT BE HER.
NO, NO, IT'S OUT THERE, IT'S OUT THERE...
WITH MY HEART, WITH MY HEART, WITH MY HEART, WITH MY...
BUT RISING AND FALLING, LOUD AND SOFT, WITH MY HEART...
MARGO... MARGO... REMEMBER...
BUT THE SOUND, IT WON'T STOP... LIKE A MOANING, SO SOFT, SO CLOSE, FROM INSIDE ME...
WHO YOU ARE...WHERE YOU ARE...
WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF *LIFE ETERNAL?*
SALVATION!
AND THE SOURCE OF SALVATION? *FORGIVENESS.* SO THEY TEACH. SO IT IS.
YET WHAT CAN BE FORGIVEN...


...IF WE DO NOT SIN?
SIN.
SIN.
SIN.
SIN.
SIN.
HOW CAN WE BE SAVED... IF WE DO NOT SIN?
HOW SHALL WE HAVE LIFE... IF WE DO NOT SIN?
TO LIVE, MY SISTERS--
SIN!
TO BE HOLY, MY SISTERS--
SIN!
SIN!
WE ARE ONE SOUL! ONE BODY! ONE SIN!
SIN!
SIN!
SIN!
SIN!
SIN! SIN! SIN!
S... S...
I RISE FROM THE RIVER OF DEATH BEARING LIFE!
SLOUGHING OFF BULLETS AND FEASTING ON POISONS, VOMITING WATER FROM MY LUNGS I THRUST LIKE A LILY FROM THE STINKING MUD TO PUMP TRUTH INTO YOU THAT MUST FUSE US IN LIGHT--
WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF LIFE ETERNAL?
I AM!

BRING ME LIFE, BROTHER GREGOR!
TEACH ME SIN, BROTHER GREGOR!
PLEASE, BROTHER GREGOR! MAKE IT ME!
ME, BROTHER! ME! ME!
NO... MARGO...

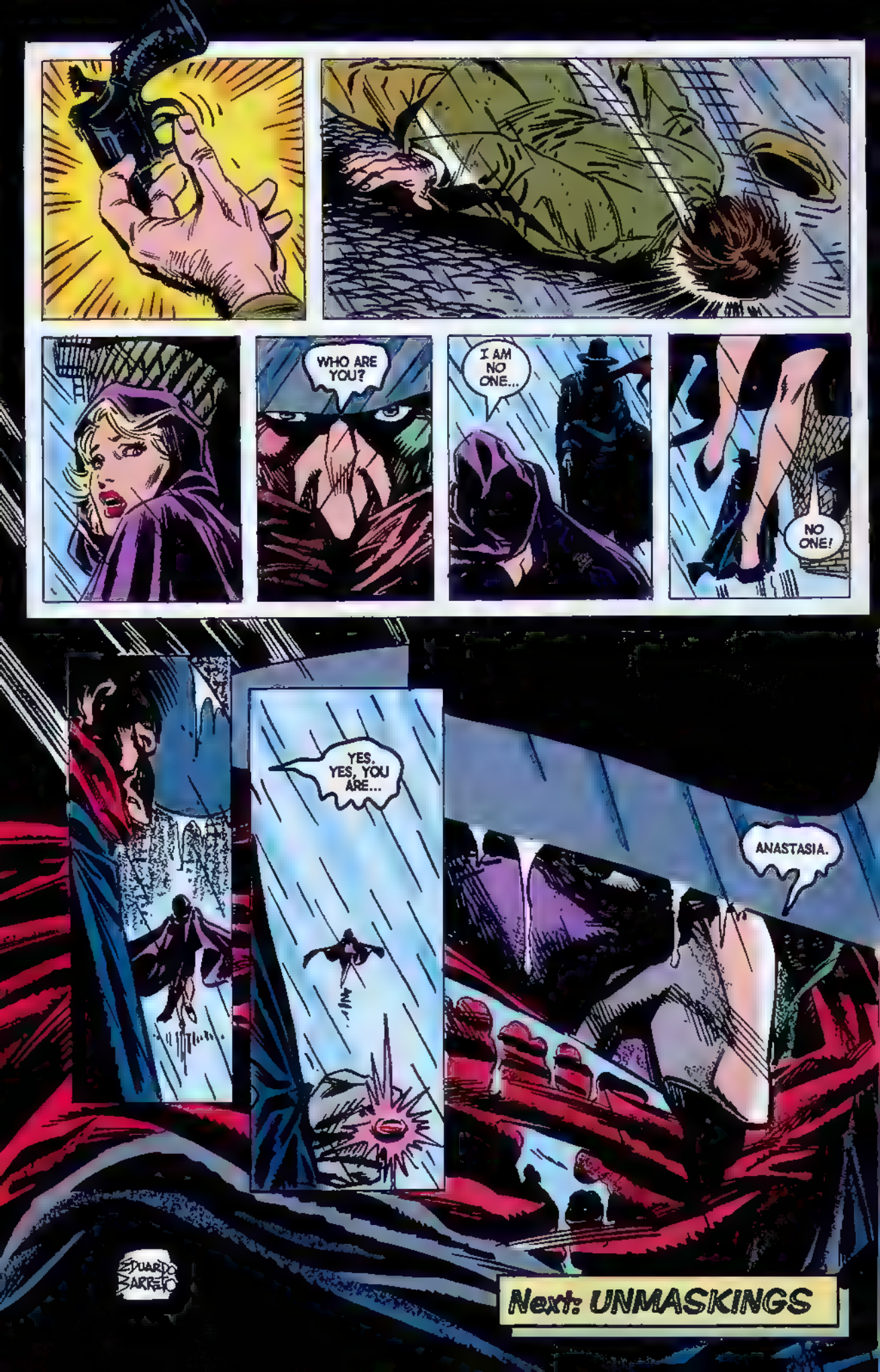
IN TIME, SISTERS, YES, EVERY ONE OF YOU IN TIME.
BUT FIRST YOU MUST LEARN, LEARN FROM A SISTER WHO FELL FROM FORGIVENESS, A SISTER WHO SINNED NOT WITH ME, BUT AGAINST ME--
LOOK UPON HER-- LOOK UPON HER--
--SISTER LUCILLE!


FORGIVE ME, BROTHER...FOR I HAVE SINNED.

EMPIRE ROOM, WALDORF-ASTORIA.
IS THAT LAMONT CRANSTON COMING THIS WAY?
WELL, YOU CAN BE SURE THE SOVIETS ARE IN VOGUE IF HE'S HERE. THAT SOCIAL ROUNDWORM NEVER TOOK A STAND FOR ANYTHING IN HIS LIFE.
HEL-LO, CRANSTON, OLD MAN! WONDERFUL TO SEE YOU HERE! WONDERFUL!
THANK YOU, DAVID. ONE DOES WEARY OF THE SAME OLD PARTIES, YOU KNOW.
THIS IS THE PLACE TO BE IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THE RIGHT PARTY. PUN INTENDED, OF COURSE, HA-HA!
... NOR FROM HARRY VINCENT? I SEE.
IF EITHER CALLS, TAKE A REPORT. I MUST MOVE TO THE NEXT STEP.
SOME DAMNED EXCITING PEOPLE HERE, CRANSTON-- THE BEST! JUST SAW JOHN DOS PASSOS A MOMENT AGO, AND--
I'M RATHER KEEN TO MEET OUR TWO SOVIET VISITORS, REALLY... JERKOV AND VASELINOVITCH, OR WHATEVER THEY CALL THEMSELVES.
OH, LAMONT, YOU DOG, YOU! DON'T LET THEM HEAR THAT.
YOU'LL FIND THEY'RE FINE FELLOWS, CRANSTON.
QUALITY STUFF, THEY...
CRANSTON?
WHO IS THAT?
THE WOMAN? HAVEN'T THE FAINTEST. LOOKS A BIT OLD-WORLD, DOESN'T SHE?

GOODNESS ME. I DO BELIEVE OLD LAMONT'S BEEN SMIT.
NO. SHE REMINDS ME OF SOMEONE...
SOMEONE WHO DIED.
LOOKS LIKE SHE'S NOTICED YOU, OLD MAN.
DOESN'T SEEM TO MAKE HER VERY HAPPY, EITHER.
NOW!
22

LET ME GO! YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO TOUCH MY PERSON!
YOU GAVE YOUR LAST COMMAND YEARS AGO, WOMAN. DID YOU HEAR ME? "WOMAN!" YOU'RE NO MORE THAN THAT NOW!
A MAN MADE A DEAL WITH ME TODAY-- A BAD DEAL FOR YOU--
RELEASE HER.
NO!
BAM
HAHA HA HAHA
BAM BAM BAM BAM


WHO ARE YOU?
I AM NO ONE...
NO ONE!
YES, YES, YOU ARE...
ANASTASIA.
EDUARDO BARRETO
Next: UNMASKINGS

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666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103

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ME AND MY SHADOW

Like any good Shadow story, this one has a slam-bang opening, a few rapid twists, and a steam-engine run toward the finish. But it also has one hell of a long backstory.

It opens with a phone call: Brian Augustyn wants me to write a SHADOW ANNUAL, set in Hollywood in 1935. I'm extremely busy at the time—*The Trouble with Girls*, EL DIABLO, THE SCORE, other stuff. I've got no business taking on a 44-page annual on short notice. But it's the Shadow ... the Shadow ...

He was created in 1930, and released a year later. You've learned that from many a text page in the past. You've learned, too, that he was a huge hit, the king of the pulp crimefighters, one of the Depression's great pop-culture symbols.

What no text page until now has mentioned is that some of his most fervent devotees were a bunch of young teenagers in Oakland, California, who used to pool their meager resources for a dime every two weeks in order to buy a single copy of THE SHADOW and pass it from hand to hand. Among them was one Russell Jones—spindleshanked newspaper hawker, golf-course caddy, illegal theater entrant, and general ne'er-do-well.

None could rival the Jones kid in his fascination for the aquiline profile, the twin .45s, the blue-lit sanctum, and the mirthless laugh of the Shadow. He and his pals went so far as to swear a sacred oath never to listen to the Shadow radio show, after the first episode showed it to deviate from the sacred text of the pulps.

I was created in 1956. (But, like the Shadow, I spent some months in development and wasn't actually released until the following year.) One of my co-creators was the aforementioned Russell Jones, no longer a paper boy or caddy but a veteran, a college graduate, and a high school teacher. He'd long ago put aside childish things, there were certainly no old pulp magazines in our household. Yet somehow the Shadow was there, lurking in the corners of our suburban ranch house through all the years of my growing up.

Often, for no reason at all, my father would intone, "Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men?" Or he'd make some disparaging remark about Orson Welles that seemed to have nothing to do with *Citizen Kane* or *The Tonight Show*. Or he'd wedge the word "aquiline" into an otherwise monosyllabic conversation, with a peculiarly ominous air.

Gradually, I gathered that these were all pieces of some shattered myth, the moraine piled up by some long-melted glacier of my dad's imagination. Then, when I was 16, I saw the first Denny O'Neil-Mike Kaluta adaptation of THE SHADOW, and it all began to make sense.

That first SHADOW issue proved to be the last big comic book thrill of my youth, because within a few months my life took some turns that drove my fascination with the four-color medium straight out of my mind. For good. I thought.

Among my interests over the years to come was the history of America—especially of that roughest and finest and most complex of decades, that fun-house mirror of the American soul, the 1930s. The Great Depression still seems to me a simultaneous revelation of everything we had ever been and ever could be. It was our zenith and our nadir, the last decade of the old America, the first decade of the new. I became convinced that somehow, someday, I was going to write something about it.

Then in the early '80s, by a suspicious conspiracy of circumstances, I found myself following the comic book field again. Suddenly my friend Will Jacobs and I were writing a book called *The Comic Book Heroes*, and the next thing we knew we were comic book writers. Among the first projects I set my mind to was *The Big Prize*, a time-travel story about a guy from the present who gets stuck in Hollywood in 1934, coming up against mayhem, the movie crowd, and his own cockeyed ideas of the past. Two issues crept out from Eternity Comics. Then it died.

But those were the comics I sent to Brian Augustyn when he was considering working with me on EL DIABLO and wanted some proof that I could write. They were on his mind when a SHADOW Annual was called for. So he picked up the phone and...

The Annual was one of those precious creative moments when everything clicks and a story seems to write itself. Brian liked it. Enough that when the overworked veteran writer who was going to handle the new Shadow series feared that he wouldn't be able to handle twelve issues a year, Brian wanted to pencil me in as a regular fill-in writer. I agreed, and decided I should start researching this character I'd heard about all my life.

Yet scarcely had I cracked a Shadow paperback than Brian called again. The launch date of THE SHADOW STRIKES! had been moved up. The designated writer wouldn't be able to fit it in. If I could get a solid first-issue script to him in three weeks, it was mine.

It was all just too perfect, as ingeniously designed as one of the Master's own cleverest traps. Clearly I had been fingered to write the Shadow since before I was born. I dived into the first script, swelling with exultation.

The swelling lasted about an hour. Then the terror set in.

Here I was, guiding the fate of this pop-culture icon whose legend has endured nearly sixty years. Embellishing the work of venerable pulpists like Walter Gibson and Theodore Tinsley. Following in the footsteps of the three talented writers who had already adapted the character to DC Comics: Denny O'Neil, Howard Chaykin, and Andy Helfer. It wasn't something to toss off without a plan.

Brian and I agreed that the original pulps would have to be our starting point. Everything that made the Shadow exciting in the first place—all the shooting, laughing, scheming, stalking, battling—must be our raw material. The pulps were indeed rough, primitive, dated, but there was too much bizarre, dark, menacing beauty in them for us to ignore.

We'd restore one element in particular to the Shadow mythos: *mystery*. Howie Chaykin presented an interesting origin for the hero—but it sounds to me like just another of the Shadow's misdirections. Forget Shambala and the Oriental Paladins. You don't know nothin' about this Shadow but what you read in these pages. There will be hints, clues, to a strange and complex past; but it'll be a long while before you get any easy explanations.

But we knew that none of us could endure just a pulp pastiche—especially since we're free to do some things with '30s material that Gibson and his cronies never were.

Like current events. They're called history now, but when the pulps were being written, the big dramas of the '30s were immediate and thrilling and explosive—*too* explosive for use in mass entertainment. But *we* can use the Japanese invasion of China. *We* can use the real gang wars of New York and Chicago. *We* can use the struggle between fascism and communism in American politics. *We* can use the armies of angry men ruined by the Depression.

And we can see what happens when those dramas are dropped into the weird, transforming brew of pulps and comics. Like our current story: it kicks off with the phony proto-*glasnost* of Stalin's Popular Front. But then enter the gypsies, the mad mystics, the

beheadings, the living dead...

We're also free to widen our scope and pull from other '30s culture: fiction, movies, radio, even comic strips. The Annual, you'll discover, owes a debt to *What Makes Sammy Run?* A coming storyline, "Curse of the Monkey Woman," was born of a Count Basie song. Ed Barreto is looking to Milton Caniff, Noel Sickles, and other giants of '30s adventure comics in forging his visual style. How can we leave that stuff out? It's too rich, too much fun, too much a part of how we remember the '30s.

We also agreed we need *characters*. Margo and Harry and Cardona and the rest of them were always fun in the pulps as functionaries of the Shadow, but that's about all they ever were. None of us—you included—would be satisfied with that for long, not the way comics have evolved. So who *are* these people? What's it like being in service to this horrific, laughing, mysterious avenger? How does he affect their lives, and how do they affect each other's? What do they do when they're not on a case? We can discover the answers to those questions together, over many months to come.

We knew, too, that there would have to be some humor. Some pizzazz. Some of the slyness, the slickness, the self-awareness of modern comics. A bit of a jaundiced modern consciousness looking back at the '30s. We never want THE SHADOW STRIKES! to read like a piece of old pulp fiction pulled out of a time capsule. It will always be a ... well, a "post-'80s" comic ... using the '30s as its clay.

I've gotten over the belief that I was destined to do this. And I've gotten over the terror that it can't be done. But I love having the chance to work with all this magnificent stuff, and I know it'll take my best effort to be worthy of it. I'm just glad to have been joined in this adventure by some considerable talents.

You all know Ed Barreto's forceful work, most recently seen in the LUTHOR graphic novel. He's especially excited to be working on THE SHADOW STRIKES!, and I think that shows in this issue. But he insists he's going to get still better and better.

And then there's Tony Tollin, not only a fine colorist, but one of the Outer Milky Way's leading experts on the Shadow. He'll let me know if I ever lose touch with the heart of the character, and drag me back into line quick. (Even if it's under threat of coloring the Shadow's cloak chartreuse).

And David Cody Weiss, who's employing some fascinating and potentially revolutionary lettering process that I won't be brazen enough to try to explain to you.

And finally Brian Augustyn, an editor with a damned good story sense and too much sheer physical bulk to be intimidated by some self-indulgent writer.

It's a wild ride we're all starting here, a cross-country ramble in a '35 Ford, a tramp steamer voyage to exotic ports, a biplane flight over uncharted mountains. Hope you join us. We can't promise where we'll end up, only that it'll be fun.

It had better be.

My dad's going to be watching.

Gerard Jones
May, 1989

* * * * *

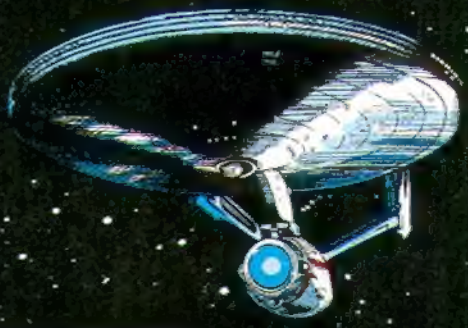
NEXT ISSUE: Harry is attacked by gypsies, Margo falls under the thrall of the mysterious Brother Gregor and the Shadow stalks the vicious killer—a killer who might just come out of the Shadow's own shrouded past. See you in thirty, you know where to find us.

NEXT ISSUE:

The Shadow Knows

CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS!

STAR TREK



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